

**Testimony to the Michigan House Committee
On Children, Families and Seniors**

**Gail Lanphear
March 22, 2012**

Thank you Chairman Kurtz and Committee Members for the opportunity to speak before this committee. I appreciate your willingness to hear the voices of Michigan families.

I am the parent and grandparent of children with serious mental health challenges; conditions involving anxiety and depression. These conditions are ones I also have struggled with since my early teens.

Professionally I am a social worker who has served families who have children with serious emotional disturbance for thirty six years. In 1989 Rosemary Allen and I established The Association for Children's Mental Health, a statewide advocacy organization.

Mental health brain disorders can be very difficult for families to deal with on a day to day basis. Most of them are under inordinate stress and far too many do not survive intact

Appropriate, timely treatment and supports are the keys to improving the quality of life for both the child and his/her family. Unfortunately the needed supports and treatment

are often unavailable because of inadequate or non-existent mental health insurance coverage. I have worked with many families whose mental health insurance had a life time cap of ten thousand dollars. One short hospital stay can more than wipe this coverage out.

Child mental health conditions are neurological, biochemical and/or genetic in origin. Are these children any less worthy of adequate insurance coverage than their friends who have asthma or diabetes? The challenges they and their families face are no less daunting.

All children with serious health conditions in Michigan deserve access to appropriate services and supports. All children with brain disorders should be covered by private insurance policies at a rate equal to those with physical conditions. To do less is to discriminate against some Michigan children, rob them of their best hope for a bright future and deprive the state of Michigan of their valuable talents and abilities.

**PLEASE SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH PARITY FOR
ALL CHILDREN!!!!**

Thank you.

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